

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figures 1 and 2. This sheet, which includes Figures 1 and 2, replaces the pending sheet including Figures 1 and 2. In Figure 1, the line to reference numeral 125 has been extended; an arrow has been added to the line to reference numeral 113. In Figure 2, the line to reference numeral 102 has been shortened to indicate the upper layer and the line to reference numeral 104 has been extended to indicate the absorption body.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

REMARKS

The Office Action of April 22, 2005, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the above Office Action, claims 1-14 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Lindsay et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,613,966). In addition, objections were made to the drawings and description and claims.

Regarding the objections to the drawings, submitted herewith is a replacement sheet including Figures 1 and 2. These figures have been amended in view of the Examiner's comments set forth in the above-identified Official Action. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully contends that this objection has been obviated.

Regarding the objection to the description, the specification has been amended as set forth above to correct the use of the trademark VELCRO and in the claims, the missing period has been added to claim 15. Thus, Applicant submits these informalities have been corrected.

Referring to the rejections under Section 112, second paragraph, claim 1 has been amended to remove the "consists of" language, thereby removing any lack of clarity in the claimed invention. Claim 16 has been amended to recite a raised portion, thereby obviated the need for antecedent basis for "the elevation portion."

As set forth above, the independent claims have been amended to recite that "the hydrogel after swelling adheres to the body of the user." More particularly, and as is clear from a reading of the entire claim, the elevation portion formed by the

swelling hydrogel will adhere to the body of the user. By having the hydrogel in an absorbent article adhere to the body of the user, the claimed invention solves the problem of mucous membranes drying out during use of the absorbent article. That is, the hydrogel after wetting will always have a moist surface and the wetting occurs when the hydrogel comes into contact with the mucous membranes. The mucous membranes are thereby "kept moist during use and the risk of chafing and other irritation of the mucous membranes is virtually wholly eliminated," as explained in the specification at page 14, paragraph 43.

In contrast, the absorbent article of *Lindsay et al.* has an uppermost surface consisting of material not being able to be gentle to sensitive areas such as mucous membranes due to the inherent dryness of the material. Said absorbent article is designed so as to favorably treat the skin which is to be kept dry, rather than mucous membranes which are to be kept moist. For example, the humps disclosed in reference WO 98/22057 are formed with a first portion 104' covered with a liquid-pervious cover layer 102. The liquid-pervious cover layer 102 is made of a conventional material which, as explained on page 8, line 25 to page 9, line 3, is designed such that the surface remains dry during use. In fact, the absorbent article of WO 98/22057 teaches away from the absorbent article as claimed, as WO 98/22057 teaches the importance of maintaining a dry surface in the article. Additionally, the conventional material from which the liquid-pervious cover layer is made would not, even if soaked in liquid, be able to exhibit the advantageous liquid-pertaining characteristics of the hydrogel.

Thus, the claimed absorbent article exhibits an improved fit and increased leakage security, as a consequence of the hydrogel, after wetting, being able to

adhere to the mucous membranes. A surface of an absorbent article being designed of conventional materials, as in the cited prior art, does not; either in dry or wet condition exhibit such adhering characteristics.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application; the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Applicant regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix

